



2022 - 2023 *Connecticut River Connections*

Connecticut River Connections will link up to 900 students in grades 6 - 8 for the study of marine and aquatic ecosystems of the Connecticut River. This valuable and shared natural resource provides the framework to introduce students to scientific inquiry while they are learning about the diversity of students from other districts. Previously funded by CSDE since 2003, *Connecticut River Connections* is a very successful program that has been highly regarded by teachers and students from participating districts.

Middle school classes from urban and rural/suburban school districts along the Connecticut River will be partnered for a joint investigation of the watershed they share. Small research teams with 2-3 students from each school will be established to conduct experiments in the classroom, in the laboratory, on the shore, and aboard our EnviroLab research vessel. Our hands-on, inquiry-based programs are carefully designed to align with middle school teaching standards, including the Next Generation Science Standards. Students will collect, handle, and study a wide variety of marine and aquatic organisms, study the behavior of eagles and seals in their natural habitats, and use sophisticated oceanographic technology to measure water quality in the Connecticut River. Along the way, they will also learn about each, other and practice the critical thinking and communication skills necessary for success in high school and beyond.

During *Connecticut River Connections*, students from different towns and different cultures work together and share the new experiences inherent in a first encounter with the marine environment. While exploring their shared watershed, they learn that the whole picture can only be seen by integrating information collected by different groups. They also learn the importance of teamwork, and an appreciation for the different skills and strengths each member brings to the team. Through the program they learn that tolerance, understanding, and cooperation are necessary for the group to successfully complete its tasks.

Parents of participating students will have an opportunity to observe the work that students accomplished during the program with a culminating *Connecticut River Connections* Open House. Students will demonstrate scientific principles and skills learned during the course of the program while parents will be able to ask questions about their experiences and the environment.

Students, teachers, and administrators can also be assured that Project Oceanology will continue to prioritize student safety. As we have throughout the pandemic, we will be prepared to implement health and safety protocols prescribed by your schools or CSDE. Live, in-person programming is still our favorite way to teach, but if your students are unable to visit the Connecticut River we'll continue to bring the Connecticut River to your classrooms and your students' homes with live, online programs!

General Information

- There are no fees for participating in *Connecticut River Connections*.
- Transportation costs are included.
- Program times are approximately 9:00am to 1:15pm.
- Bus pick-up and drop-off times are coordinated with participating schools.
- School teachers or substitute teachers are asked to accompany their classes.
- Each set of partners will meet eight (8) times over the course of the program and each meeting will include a social/multicultural component and a science component.
- Students will be asked to take a pre and post-program assessment; students and teachers will be asked to submit a post-program evaluation.
- Project Oceanology marine science educators possess a minimum BA or BS degree in biology, environmental science, oceanography, or a related field and have knowledge of marine science and a broad interest in oceans; they are familiar with Next Generation Science Standards and Ocean Literacy Principles.

Planned Events

- Meeting at Project Oceanology Marine Laboratory
- Meeting on CT River aboard EnviroLab Research Vessel
- Meeting at Project Oceanology aboard EnviroLab Research Vessel
- Meeting at Urban School
- Meeting at Partner School
- Meeting on CT River aboard EnviroLab Research Vessel
- Meeting on CT River for Shoreline Exploration
- Open House with families